

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8084

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 1319

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, EI

SUBJECT: GOI VIEW OF WEEKEND BOMBINGS

REF: DUBLIN 1309

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE WEEKEND BOMBINGS (REFTEL) WITH AN OFFICIAL OF THE ANGLO-IRISH DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THIS OFFICIAL, WHO HAS EXTENSIVE PERSONAL CONTACTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE BOMBINGS WERE A ONE-TIME OPERATION BY A FEW INDIVIDUALS AND DID NOT REPRESENT EITHER A DECISION BY THE UDA LEADERSHIP OR THE BEGINNING OF A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN OF TERRORISM IN THE REPUBLIC. HE SPECULATED THAT THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED MAY HAVE WANTED TO DAMAGE IRELAND'S TOURIST INDUSTRY, BUT HE HASTENED TO ADD THAT HE HAD NO FIRM INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS OPINION. HE DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF NORTHERN IRISH SPEND THEIR WEEKENDS AT HOTELS IN THE REPUBLIC AND THE BOMBINGS MIGHT THEREFORE HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE THIS TRADE.

2. WITH REGARD TO THE UDA LEADERSHIP, OUR CONTACT SAID THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT REGARDS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UDA AS BEING "NOT SO RADICAL." HE SAID THAT ONE HIGH-LEVEL UNIONIST OFFICIAL HAD TOLD HIM PERSONALLY THAT THE UNIONIST LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT THE IRISH

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GOVERNMENT IS SINCERE ABOUT CRACKING DOWN ON THE IRA --- MORE SO,

THAN UNIONIST OFFICIAL VOLUNTEERED, THAN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. UDA CONFIDENCE IN THE GOI'S APPROACH TO THE IRA HAS BEEN SLOWLY BUILT UP OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO AND HAS BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY SUCH ACTIONS AS THE GOI'S HANDLING OF THE HERREMA KIDNAP CASE AND THE PASSAGE BY THE IRISH PARLIAMENT OF THE CRIMINAL LAW JURISDICTION ACT. THUS, THE GOI IS CONFIDENT THAT THE UDA LEADERSHIP DID NOT ORCHESTRATE THE LATEST BOMBINGS. HOWEVER, OUR CONTACT NOTED THAT THE UDA LEADERSHIP DOES NOT HAVE TIGHT CONTROL OVER THE ORGANIZATION, AND MANY OF THE RANK AND FILE WHO HAVE THE POPULAR IMAGE OF AN IRISH GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY AIDING AND ABETTING THE IRA ARE CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT ACTION.

3. ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACT, POLICE AND ARMY OFFICIALS HAVE REVIEWED THE SECURITY MEASURES IN EFFECT IN THE REPUBLIC. THEY FEEL THERE IS VERY LITTLE MORE THAT CAN BE DONE. THE BORDER IS LIKE A SIEVE, AND COMPLETE CONTROL IS IMPOSSIBLE. IN ANY EVENT, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF TRADE AND TOURISM BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH THAT THE GOI DOES NOT WANT TO IMPEDE UNNECESSARILY. FURTHERMORE, IF THEIR ANALYSIS IS CORRECT THAT THE WEEKEND BOMBINGS WERE ISOLATED INCIDENTS, THERE IS LITTLE POINT IN EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY MEASURES.

CURLEY

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